

Appln. No. 09/810,903  
Amendment  
Reply to Office Action dated Dec. 1, 2004

Docket No. 6979-1

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method for efficiently delivering packages in bulk ~~package delivery~~ for recipients comprising:  
transporting containers of items organized by item identifier to a distribution center;  
creating a package at said distribution center containing at least one item ordered for a  
recipient, by reorganizing said transported items by an identifier of a destination centralized  
pickup location and at least one of an identifier of said recipient and an identifier which is linked to  
said recipient;

associating an ~~article~~ identifier of a said package with an said identifier of a destination centralized pickup location;

grouping a plurality of said packages for a plurality of recipients for delivery to said destination centralized pickup location based on said association of said ~~article~~ package identifier and said destination centralized pickup location identifier;

delivering said grouped packages in bulk ~~in a single delivery step~~ to said destination centralized pickup location;

randomly selecting a storage locker bin from a system of storage locker bins at said destination centralized pickup location;

loading each delivered package into a respective randomly selected storage locker bin; and  
associating said ~~article~~ package identifier of said loaded delivered package with an identifier of said randomly selected storage locker bin.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 2 1, ~~wherein the step of delivering said packages in bulk comprises~~ further comprising sorting at an origination regional

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distribution center ~~(RDC) location~~ items received from ~~a plurality of retailers~~ at least one retailer delivered to said origination ~~RDC location~~ distribution center, said items destined for a plurality of said recipients, said items organized by ~~a common~~ item identifier, wherein said step of creating a package occurs at a destination distribution center after said sorted items have been transported to said destination distribution center from said origination distribution center.

4. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 3, wherein the step of sorting said received items at said origination ~~RDC location~~ distribution center further comprises:  
identifying said received items to ~~at least one of~~ a destination centralized pickup location ~~and a destination local distribution hub;~~  
identifying said received items to a said destination RDC distribution center; and  
sorting and grouping said identified received items by said identified destination ~~RDC distribution center~~, said identified received items organized by ~~a common~~ item identifier.

5-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently amended) The method according to claim ~~6~~ 3, further comprising consolidating more than one of said ~~located~~ items destined for ~~said a~~ specific recipient, said more than one ~~located~~ item~~[[s]]~~ originating from ~~more than~~ at least one of said plurality of retailer~~[[s]]~~.

8. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 7, further comprising receiving said ~~located~~ items associated with ~~a single~~ at least one order from at least one fulfillment location, ~~said fulfillment location being at least one of a retailer, a manufacturer, a merchant and a supplier.~~

9. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of randomly loading said bulk delivered package into a system of storage locker bins further comprises:

capturing electronically~~[[,]]~~ an identifier for said bulk delivered package; and

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associating said electronically captured identifier of said bulk delivered package with an electronically captured identifier of one of said storage locker bins within said system of storage locker bins.

10. (Original) The method according to claim 9, further comprising, retrieving said bulk delivered package created for said specific recipient from a storage locker bin, said retrieving step including authenticating an identity of said recipient prior to at least one of revealing an identity of said storage locker bin and providing access to said storage locker bin.

11. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 2 1, further comprising:  
creating a returns package comprising at least one item from at least one of a bulk delivered package retrieved by a recipient and a package delivered to a customer specified address, said returns package destined for a retailer associated with said at least one item; and  
delivering in bulk sorted and grouped returns packages to a returns facility of said associated retailer.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 11, further comprising submitting said returns package for pickup at a destination centralized pickup location.

13. (Currently amended) A method for efficient bulk package delivery for recipients comprising:  
delivering said packages in bulk for a plurality of recipients in a single delivery stop to a destination centralized pickup location, and delivering at least one item destined for a recipient;  
loading said bulk delivered packages randomly into an automated system of storage locker bins;  
creating a returns package comprising at least one item from at least one of a bulk delivered package retrieved by a recipient and a package delivered to a customer specified address, said returns package destined for a retailer associated with said at least one item;

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identifying a returns facility identifier and a returns local market identifier for said returns package based upon an identifier of said retailer;

identifying a ~~regional~~ distribution center (~~RDC~~) identifier associated with said returns local market identifier;

submitting said returns package for pickup at a destination centralized pickup location;

transporting said submitted returns package from said destination centralized pickup location of said returns package submission to a destination ~~RDC~~ distribution center associated with said destination centralized pickup location of said returns package submission;

sorting and grouping at said associated destination ~~RDC~~ distribution center a plurality of transported returns packages by said identified ~~RDC~~ distribution center identifier associated with said returns local market identifier for bulk delivery to an origination ~~RDC~~ distribution center associated with said identified ~~RDC~~ distribution center identifier;

transporting said sorted and grouped returns packages from said associated destination ~~RDC~~ distribution center to said associated origination ~~RDC~~ distribution center;

sorting at said associated origination ~~RDC~~ distribution center said transported returns packages by said identified returns local market identifier of each said returns package;

sorting and grouping at said associated origination ~~RDC~~ distribution center said sorted returns package by said identified returns facility identifier of said sorted returns package for bulk delivery to a returns facility associated with said associated returns facility identifier; and

delivering in bulk said sorted and grouped returns packages to said associated returns facility.

14. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of randomly loading said bulk delivered package into ~~an automated~~ said system of storage locker bins comprises automatically triggering the dispatch of an electronic notification to said recipient of said bulk delivered package, said electronic notification having at least an identifier of said destination centralized pickup location.

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15. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein said step of automatically triggering the dispatch of said electronic notification further comprises recording information necessary for billing at least one of a customer who ordered an item of said bulk delivered package, said recipient and a retailer, said information including at least one of an order identifier, an ordering customer identifier, a recipient identifier, a customer identifier, a package identifier, a delivery date, a delivery time, a delivery notification date, a delivery notification time, a retrieval date and a retrieval time.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 14, wherein said electronic notification to said recipient comprises, at least one of a facsimile, an email, a telephone call, and a page.

17. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising retrieval of said bulk delivered package by said recipient through self-service.

18. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of loading said bulk delivered packages randomly into said system of storage locker bins further comprises loading a bulk delivered package into any unoccupied storage locker bin within said system of storage locker bins, said unoccupied storage locker bins having dimensions large enough to accept said bulk delivered package, said system of storage locker bins being configurable.

19. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising controlling a temperature within said bins of said system of storage locker bins by locating said bins in a temperature controlled environment.

20. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of delivering said packages in bulk to said destination centralized pickup location further comprises accommodating delivery of said packages in bulk to said destination centralized pickup location from a plurality of different shippers.

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21. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of loading said bulk delivered packages randomly into said system of storage locker bins further comprises accommodating loading of said bulk delivered package into said system of storage locker bins from a plurality of different shippers.

22. - 24. (Cancelled)

25. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:  
creating a bulk delivered customer distribution center (CDC) outbound package consisting of at least one item destined for a recipient at one of a specified destination centralized pickup location and a specified address;

submitting said bulk delivered CDC outbound package for pickup at a destination centralized pickup location; and

delivering a plurality of said CDC outbound packages in bulk to one of said specified destination centralized pickup location and a local distribution hub.

26 - 28. (Cancelled)

29. (Currently amended) A system for efficient bulk package delivery for recipients, the system comprising:

package creation means located at a distribution center for creating a package containing at least one item ordered for a recipient, the package creation means creating a package by reorganizing items transported to the distribution center originally organized by item identifier, the package being organized by an identifier of a destination centralized pickup location and at least one of an identifier of a recipient and an identifier which is linked to said recipient;

associating means for associating an ~~article~~ identifier of a created package with an the identifier of a destination centralized pickup location;

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grouping means for grouping a plurality of packages intended for a plurality of recipients for delivery to said destination centralized pickup location based on said association of said ~~article~~ package identifier and said destination centralized pickup location identifier;

delivery means for delivering said grouped packages in bulk in a single delivery stop to said destination centralized pickup location;

a system of storage locker bins at said destination centralized pickup location, from which a storage locker bin is randomly selectable;

means for loading each delivered package into a respective randomly selected storage locker bin; and

associating means for associating the ~~article~~ package identifier of the loaded delivered package with an identifier of the randomly selected storage locker bin.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Currently amended) The system according to claim 30 ~~29~~, wherein said delivery means for delivering of said packages in bulk comprises further comprising means for sorting at an origination ~~regional~~ distribution center (RDC) location, items received from a plurality of ~~retailers~~ at least one retailer delivered to said origination ~~RDC location~~ distribution center, said items destined for a plurality of said recipients, and said items organized by ~~a common~~ item identifier, wherein said package creation occurs at a destination distribution center after said sorted items have been transported to said destination distribution center from said origination distribution center.

32. (Currently amended) The system according to claim 31, wherein said means for sorting said received items at said origination ~~RDC~~ distribution center location further comprises:

identification means for identifying said received items to ~~at least one of~~ a destination centralized pickup location ~~and a destination local distribution hub;~~

identification means for identifying said received items to a destination ~~RDC~~ distribution center; and

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means for sorting and grouping said identified received items by said identified destination ~~RDC distribution center~~, said identified received items organized by ~~a common~~ item identifier.

33-34. (Cancelled)

35. (Currently amended) The system according to claim 34 ~~31~~, further comprising consolidation means for consolidating more than one of said ~~located~~ items destined for a specific recipient, said more than one of said items originating from ~~said plurality of retailers~~ at least one retailer, destined for a specific recipient

36. (Currently amended) The system according to claim 35, further comprising means for receiving said ~~located~~ items associated with ~~a single~~ at least one order from at least one fulfillment location, ~~said fulfillment location being at least one of a retailer, a manufacturer, a merchant and a supplier.~~

37. (Currently amended) The system according to claim 29, further comprising means for randomly loading said bulk delivered package into said ~~automated~~ system of storage locker bins, wherein said random loading means comprises:

electronics for electronically capturing an identifier for said bulk delivered package; and  
means for associating said electronically captured identifier of said bulk delivered package with an electronically captured identifier of one of said storage locker bins within said automated system of storage locker bins.

38. (Original) The system according to claim 37, further comprising, retrieval means for retrieving said bulk delivered package created for said specific recipient from a storage locker bin, said retrieval means having a computing means for authenticating an identity of said recipient prior to at least one of revealing an identity of said storage locker bin and providing access to said storage locker bin.

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39. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 30, further comprising:  
means for creating a returns package consisting of at least one item from at least one of a bulk delivered package retrieved by a recipient and a package delivered to a customer specified address, said returns package destined for a retailer associated with said at least one item; and  
delivery means for delivering in bulk, a plurality of sorted and grouped returns packages to a returns facility of said associated retailer.

40. (Original) The system according to claim 39, further comprising means for submitting said returns package for pickup at a destination centralized pickup location.

41. (Currently amended) A system for efficient bulk package delivery for recipients, the system comprising:  
delivery means for delivering said packages in bulk for a plurality of recipients in a single delivery stop to a destination centralized pickup location and for delivery of at least one item destined for a recipient;  
a means for randomly loading said bulk delivered packages into an automated system of storage locker bins;  
means for creating a returns package comprising at least one item from at least one of a bulk delivered package retrieved by a recipient and a package delivered to a customer specified address, said returns package destined for a retailer associated with said at least one item;  
identification means for identifying a returns facility identifier and a returns local market identifier for said returns package based upon an identifier of said retailer;  
identification means for identifying a ~~regional~~ distribution center (RDC) identifier associated with said returns local market identifier;  
means for submitting said returns package for pickup at a destination centralized pickup location;  
transportation means for transporting said submitted returns package from said destination centralized pickup location of said returns package submission to a destination ~~RDC~~ distribution

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center associated with said destination centralized pickup location of said returns package submission;

means for sorting and grouping at said associated destination RDC distribution center said transported returns package by said identified RDC distribution center identifier associated with said returns local market identifier for bulk delivery to an origination RDC distribution center associated with said identified RDC distribution center identifier;

transportation means for transporting said sorted and grouped returns package from said associated destination RDC distribution center to said associated origination RDC distribution center;

means for sorting at said associated origination RDC distribution center said transported returns package by said identified returns local market identifier of said returns package;

means for sorting and grouping at said associated origination RDC distribution center said sorted returns package by said identified returns facility identifier of said sorted returns package for bulk delivery to a returns facility associated with said associated returns facility identifier; and

delivery means for delivering in bulk said sorted and grouped returns package to said associated returns facility.

42. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said means for randomly loading said bulk delivered package into said system of storage locker bins comprises electronic circuitry and software for automatically triggering the dispatch of an electronic notification to said recipient of said bulk delivered package, said electronic notification having at least an identifier of said destination centralized pickup location.

43. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 42, wherein said electronic circuitry and software for automatically triggering the dispatch of said electronic notification further comprises circuitry and associated software for recording information necessary for billing at least one of a customer who ordered an item of said bulk delivered package, said recipient and a retailer, said information including at least one of an order identifier, an ordering customer identifier, a recipient identifier, a customer identifier, a package identifier, a delivery date, a

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delivery time, a delivery notification date, a delivery notification time, a retrieval date and a retrieval time.

44. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 42, wherein said electronic notification to said recipient comprises at least one of a facsimile, an email, a telephone call, and a page.

45. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, further comprising retrieval means for retrieval of said bulk delivered package by said recipient through self-service.

46. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said means for loading said bulk delivered package randomly into said system of storage locker bins further comprises means for loading said bulk delivered package into any unoccupied storage locker bin within said system of storage locker bins, said unoccupied storage locker bins having dimensions large enough to accept said bulk delivered package, said system of storage locker bins being configurable.

47. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said delivery means for delivering said package in bulk to said destination centralized pickup location further comprises means for accommodating delivery of said package in bulk to said destination centralized pickup location from a plurality of different shippers.

48. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said means for loading said bulk delivered package randomly into said automated system of storage locker bins further comprises means for accommodating loading of said bulk delivered package into said automated system of storage locker bins from a plurality of different shippers.

49. – 51. (Cancelled)

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52. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, further comprising:  
means for creating bulk delivered customer distribution center (CDC) outbound package consisting of at least one item destined for a recipient at one of a specified destination centralized pickup location and a specified address;  
means for submitting said bulk delivered CDC outbound package for pickup at a destination centralized pickup location; and  
delivery means for delivering said CDC outbound package in bulk to one of said specified destination centralized pickup location and a destination local distribution hub.

53 – 55. (Cancelled).

56. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of grouping a plurality of packages for a plurality of recipients for delivery to said destination centralized pickup location is accomplished within the step of creating a package at said distribution center as comprised:

sorting items organized by item identifier to a packing station associated with said destination centralized pickup location; and

picking items identified for a specific recipient from said items organized by item identifier at said packing station associated with said destination centralized pickup location to create a package for said specific recipient.

57. (New) The method according to claim 1, further comprising sorting at an origination distribution center items received from at least one retailer delivered to said origination distribution center, said items destined for a plurality of said recipients, said items organized by item identifier, wherein said step of creating a package occurs at said origination distribution center, said origination distribution center also serving as a destination distribution center.

58. (New) The method according to claim 57, further comprising consolidating more than one of said items destined for a specific recipient, said more than one item originating from at least one retailer.

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59. (New) The method according to claim 58, further comprising receiving said items associated with at least one order from at least one fulfillment location.

60. (New) The system according to claim 29, further comprising means for grouping a plurality of packages for a plurality of recipients for delivery to said destination centralized pickup location, as further comprised within the package creation means at said distribution center:

sorting means for sorting items organized by item identifier to a packing station associated with said destination centralized pickup location;

identifying means at said packing station for identifying items for a specific recipient from said sorted items organized by item identifier; and

picking means for picking said identified items for a specific recipient from said items organized by item identifier at said packing station to create a package for said specific recipient.

61. (New) The system according to claim 29, further comprising means for sorting at an origination distribution center, items received from at least one retailer delivered to said origination distribution center, said items destined for a plurality of said recipients, and said items organized by item identifier, wherein said package creation occurs at said origination distribution center, said origination distribution center also serving as a destination distribution center.

62. (New) The system according to claim 61, further comprising consolidation means for consolidating more than one of said items destined for a specific recipient, said more than one item originating from at least one retailer.

63. (New) The system according to claim 62, further comprising means for receiving said items associated with at least one order from at least one fulfillment location.